

South Region

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NEWS RELEASE

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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WEEKLY REPORT August 1 – 7, 2003

This report represents some significant events the FWC handled over the past week; however, it does not include all actions taken by the Division of Law Enforcement.

SOUTH REGION

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Two all-terrain vehicle operators, arrested for trespassing and fleeing by Officers Bill Stiffler and A. J. Maynard in June, were sentenced to two days in jail and fined \$468.00.

Officers Santiago Ayala and David Burnsed recovered a stolen 33-foot Hydrasport boat in the Port of Miami on July 27, 2003.

While checking a vessel near Virginia Key the same day, Officer Leo Benavente found four undersized mangrove snappers, two undersized yellowtail snappers, one undersized lane snapper and five undersized mutton snappers. The skipper was cited appropriately.

Officers Alfredo Escanio and Leo Benavente had a busy lobster day on Thursday. Officer Escanio accounted for six resource citations, one license violation and seven boating safety violations. Officer Benavente had seven resource citations, three license violations and six boating safety citations.

Officers Leo Benavente and Alfredo Escanio recovered a stolen 25-foot Grady White vessel in the L-31N Canal. This was one of several vessels recovered in that location.

The Investigation Section, along with officers from Lake Okeechobee and Fish Eating Creek, saturated boat ramps as well as water patrol in the Biscayne Bay Area during the Spiny Lobster

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 2

Mini Season. Dedication and long hours on water and land resulted in an effective detail. Forty- five arrests were made, including possession of wrung tails, over the bag limit of lobsters, undersized lobsters, egg bearing lobsters, over the bag limit of gray snappers, undersized red and gag grouper, and taking a 47inch snook by spearing during the closed season. In addition, two arrests were made for no fishing licenses, two arrests were made for no diver down flag, and one arrest was made for littering. Ten warnings were issued for mainly possession of undersized spiny lobsters. And, one rigid inflatable Avon boat was seized for having both hull identification numbers removed. A forfeiture package has been forwarded to the Attorney General's Office regarding this case.

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Ernie Light was dispatched to a vessel that broke free from it's mooring and drifted into the FP&L intake canal. An FP&L worker feared the vessel would cause the plant to be shut down if it could not be removed in time. Officer Light located a passing boater who offered to tow the vessel safely away. Then, Officer Light located the owner of the vessel and issued him a warning for the drifting vessel. The owner took the vessel to the dump.

A woman who had been lobster diving off John Lloyd State Park was found to be in possession of an egg bearing spiny lobster. Officer Kuester issued her a citation and released the lobster back into the water. Kuester, a recent academy graduate, completed his final phase of the Field Training Officer program and was released this week to work on his own.

Sergeants James Shores and Bob Pachucki with Officer Pope worked boat ramps and beaches in Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood areas for the mini season. Numerous lobsters were checked and no violations were observed.

On Thursday, July 24, Officer Pat Corley responded to a call regarding an alligator that was being held in a cage. When he arrived at the scene, the alligator turned out to be a 3-foot caiman that was wrapped up in a hand net and placed in a dog carrier. Pat removed the severely agitated caiman from the carrier and took it to Native Village.

On Monday, July 28, Officer Corley and Lieutenant Lee Palfrey responded to a call regarding a vessel detained by the Coast Guard. The person, claiming to be the owner of the vessel, had no proof of ownership other than a forged title. The registered owner (as appeared on the false title) was the Corpus Christi Ecclesiastical Government accompanied by a Seal of the Ambassador of Jesus Christ. Additionally, the subject gave several false identities. The subject was placed under arrest for presenting a forged title and failure to transfer a vessel title within 30 days of purchase.

On Wednesday, July 30, Officers Corley and Kenny Holt worked a detail at the 15th Street Boat Ramp in Ft. Lauderdale for the mini-season. While most of the vessels were in compliance, one case was made for undersized lobsters.

On August 3, Officers Christopher Colon and Ron Sacco made a routine, marine fisheries inspection on a vessel entering the Hillsboro Inlet. During the inspection, the officers discovered

M O R E

a cooler full of miscellaneous fish that included Nassau groupers, spiny lobsters, and wrung lobster tails. Due to the quantity of fish on board, they escorted the vessel to the 14th Street Boat Ramp in Pompano Beach to continue the investigation. Appropriate citations were issued to the vessel's captain.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Starting at approximately 9:00 pm on Tuesday, July 29, and continuing through Thursday, July 31, at midnight, Lieutenant Laurie Luher's squad, along with Captain David Stermen, participated in a Joint Taskforce with the Coast Guard Lake Worth Station for the two-day mini-season. Continuous 24-hour patrols and officers from both agencies were placed on each department's vessels. The Coast Guard contributed their 41-foot cutter and stationed it at the Lake Worth Inlet. The six-man squad inspected 199 vessels, 685 users on land and water, issued eight Uniform Boating Citations, twelve resource citations, 35 written boating safety warnings, and five resource warnings. Two of the resource violations were for egg-bearing lobsters, one was for over the bag limit of lobsters, and one was for undersized kingfish. Approximately 15 USCG personnel contributed their time and three vessels to this detail and it was a complete success. The areas targeted were Lake Worth Inlet to Jupiter Inlet.

On Saturday, August 2, Officer Atwell Pride was on routine patrol when he saw a vessel quickly approach the dock at Currie Park. When the operator realized he was going too fast, he put his throttles in hard reverse and tried to avoid striking the dock. He hit the dock and the operator and the passengers thought it was quite funny. Officer Pride approached the operator and detected a heavy odor of alcoholic beverages. The subject was asked to submit to standardized field sobriety tests and he refused. The subject then was taken to the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office on Gun Club Road to submit a sample of his breath. He refused. The subject was charged with operating a vessel while impaired and reckless operation. He was booked into the county jail.

Officer Jeff Gouveia received a loaner in-car video unit for assessment. The unit mounts to the interior roof of his vehicle and films through the windshield. A small microphone and transmitter is attached to the officer's gun belt and transmits audio back to the camera.

Investigators Ken Hanna, Travis Franklin, and Larry Ayers worked the lobster mini-season in Palm Beach, Martin, and St. Lucie Counties. Three citations and two warnings were issued.

HENDRY AND GLADES COUNTIES

Lieutenant Pam Thorn along with Officers Joe Simpson, Eddie Brown, Kevin Losee, and Justin Allen traveled to south Miami-Dade County to work two lobster mini-season days on Wednesday, July 30 and Thursday, July 31. The officers assisted Investigations in a plain-clothes capacity. These details tend to generate stories. Officer Brown and Lieutenant Thorn had been watching a subject take lobster for some time and eventually drifted in close to him. Apparently, they made a convincing couple. When Officer Brown held up a badge and identified himself saying, "Fish and Wildlife", the subject looked past our officer scanning all around the area and asked, "Where, where is Fish and Wildlife?" Officer Brown was forced to point to his

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 4

badge and say, "I'm right here." All personnel reported the detail was a great learning experience.

On Wednesday, July 23, Officers Jeff Burke and Tim Sweat were on patrol south of Immokalee on SR 29 when they observed a vehicle towing a utility trailer with no brake lights. The officers initiated a traffic stop to find out if the driver was aware of the situation. Upon approaching the driver and the vehicle, Officer Burke could smell a strong odor of marijuana inside the truck. Officer Burke read the subject Miranda Warnings and the subject admitted to have been smoking a joint prior to being pulled over. When the subject exited the vehicle, Officers Sweat and Burke noticed a clear plastic bag containing marijuana. The subject was placed under arrest for possession of marijuana less than 20 grams and a citation was issued for insufficient trailer lights.

SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT AREA

MONROE COUNTY

On July 30, Officers Jeremy Huff and Gordon Sharp conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel with a diver down flag violation in Murray's Channel, Key West. Two divers were in the water as they approached and the third subject told the officers that he had only one lobster on board. The officers observed a large amount of crawfish blood in the boat and continued to question the man. He finally revealed that they had already been out earlier and had 17 more crawfish in his vehicle at the Hyatt Hotel. Officer Huff entered the water and dove above the two harvesters in the water. He observed them bagging crawfish before diving down and retrieving each diver's catch. The diver immediately surfaced and the officer identified himself as a Fish and Wildlife Officer. Back onboard the vessel, one of the divers told the officers this was their first dive of the day. When questioned again, the divers then told the officers they originally had a fourth diver with them; however, their friend only had a first name of Gary. The officers directed the divers back to the dock and inspected their catch inside the vehicle. Inside were 18 crawfish. In total, the three subjects were in possession of 30 crawfish, 4 were undersize. The officers cited two individuals with possession of six over the bag limit, and one for possession of four undersize crawfish. The two officers continued their patrol of the Key West area and issued citations to a Sarasota man for possession of four undersize crawfish, a Key West resident for possession of five undersize crawfish, a Little Torch resident for possession of four undersize crawfish, a subject from Miami Lakes with possession of two wrung crawfish tails, and two Bradenton residents for failing to dive within 300 feet from their divers down flag.

Sanctuary Lieutenant Bill Burns and Officer Bill Green responded to information called in by FWC Pilot John Murphy. The pilot observed a white vessel with three divers in the water with tickle sticks at the Sombrero Reef SPA. When the officers arrived, they observed a subject getting out of the water with a net and a tickle stick. When asked if they had any crawfish, the captain of the vessel stated they had four. A fisheries inspection determined that two of the crawfish were undersize. The captain was a physician with a local practice in Marathon. A federal citation was issued for fishing within the SPA and warnings were issued for possession of undersize crawfish. Later that day, Officer Bill Green issued a citation to an individual for possession of five undersize crawfish.

M O R E

Two visiting United States Naval law enforcement personnel from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, rode with various officers during the crawfish sport season. The purpose of their visit was to observe first hand FWC's enforcement efforts and issues in order to help them design a new marine enforcement plan. The complexities of their enforcement issues with International, National, intergovernmental, military and non-military considerations make their task challenging. Both Naval personnel learned a lot and were impressed with Mini-Season.

Sanctuary Officer Liz McCoy and David Dipre cited a local Key West resident for possession of 3 undersize crawfish. The next day, they issued three federal citations to a residents of Honolulu and West Palm Beach for harvesting 18 crawfish within the Western Sambo's Sanctuary Protected Area.

At Little Palm Island, Officers Martin Messier, Christian Mathisen and Sanctuary Officers Rama Shuster and Marc Suckell responded to a vessel hit and run. During nighttime hours, a Big Pine man operating a 29' aluminum vessel struck a 65' sailing vessel chartered by the Boy Scouts of America. The vessel fled into the darkness, but was soon reported aground by witnesses at Little Palm Island. When the officers arrived, the vessel had freed itself and the occupants were attempting to secure to the docks at Little Palm. A physical encounter ensued when the operator of the fleeing vessel refused to comply with the officer's commands to keep his hands away from the dive knife strapped to the suspect's leg. The man was arrested on two criminal charges, leaving the scene of an accident, violation of a navigation rule resulting in an accident. The 29' aluminum vessel was equipped with radar and bow spotlight, but the operator failed to utilize the equipment during his nighttime cruising. Additionally, a fisheries inspection resulted in additional criminal charges of possession of egg bearing crawfish and undersize crawfish.

Sanctuary Officer David McDaniel while conducting a fisheries inspection in Adams Cut, Key Largo, issued a citation for possession of five undersize red grouper and a warning for possession of over the limit hogfish. The fishermen were all residents of Florida City. While patrolling at Triangles, he issued a citation to an individual for spear fishing in the Upper Keys and gave a warning for interference when the man dropped his spear gun. Shortly afterward, he met with Sanctuary Officer Scott Larosa and continued their water patrol to North Dry Rocks. There, Officer McDaniel encountered a man from Port Charlotte who was spear fishing in the Management Area and issued him a federal citation for the violation. Officer Larosa also issued citations for failure to display a diver down flag, possession of undersize crawfish and fishing inside the French Reef Sanctuary Preservation Area.

On July 31, Officers Seth Montgomery and Robert Brienza issued a citation to a Boca Raton man who claimed he accidentally punctured four crawfish carapaces with his bare hands as he picked them up. The man was cited for possession of four speared crawfish. Later, Officer Brienza recalled he previously cited the same man for possession of three undersize red grouper, two undersize gag grouper. In addition, it was learned the man had numerous previous contacts with FWC and had been cited for other violations.

Officer Messier arrested a local juvenile on Summerland Key for resisting arrest with violence when the juvenile suddenly became verbally abusive and physically resisted arrest. The encounter began when the juvenile, along with two other friends, were observed diving without

M O R E

displaying a diver down flag along a rock jetty in Niles Channel. When the group was found to be in possession of undersize crawfish, the officer intended to educate the group of youngsters and release them with a verbal warning just prior to the physical altercation.

Sanctuary Lieutenant Bill Burns and Officer Bill Green took Colonel Julie Jones on patrol from Coffin's Patch SPA to Looe Key SPA. The day was uneventful with some fisheries inspections throughout the patrol. Overall, officers throughout the Keys reported the second day of sport season was remarkably slower than the pre-season detail and the first day of sport season.

Crawfish Sport Season Overview

In addition to the focus on crawfish enforcement and other resource protection, boating safety violations, failure to display diver down flags, and failure to possess a Florida Saltwater Fishing License with crawfish endorsement composed a majority of the enforcement and educational issues.

This year, during the crawfish sport season, there were fewer vessel inspections and users checked than last year. Last year 3,518 vessel inspections and 12,621 users were checked and this year 2,972 vessel inspections occurred with 10,036 users checked even though the documented activity for this year included the Monday, Tuesday, and Friday preceding and following actual sport days. Activity documented by officers is also less than last year. Last year's documented activity includes the Tuesday preceding crawfish sport season, but not the Friday following sport season. Also notable is the number of boating accidents reported this year during sport season was 23 and only one from last year, and during Phase I, pre-season detail, 15 boating accidents were reported. Although none of the boating accidents involved fatalities or major property damage, the increase in reported boating accidents was significantly higher than last year. The following overall statistics of FWC activity are provided for comparison:

This year during Phase II, July 28 through August 1, 2003, FWC documented 109 resource citations, 19 other citations, 87 Uniform Boating Citations, 356 boating safety warnings, 234 resource warnings, 27 other warnings, 3 BUI arrests, 90 calls for service, 4 search and rescue missions, and 23 boating accidents. A total of 896 water patrol hours were conducted with 677.5 hours dedicated to boating safety. Total overtime utilized was 829.25 hours.

Last year's statistics from July 22 through July 25, 2002, documented 228 resource citations, 31 other citations, 64 Uniform Boating Citations, 216 boating safety warnings, 269 resource warnings, 71 other warnings, 1 BUI arrest, 157 calls for service, 16 search and rescue missions, and 1 boating accident. A total of 621 water patrol hours were conducted with 672.5 dedicated to boating safety. Total overtime hours utilized was 713 hours.

Statistics for the Phase I, pre-season enforcement effort between July 24th through 28th are as follows: 1,015 vessel inspections and 3,884 users checked resulted in 37 Uniform Boating Citations, 137 resource citations, 20 other citations, 97 boating safety warnings, 136 resource warnings, 25 other warnings, 1 BUI arrest, 107 calls for service, 3 search and rescue missions,

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 7

and 15 boating accidents. A total of 626.5 water patrol hours were conducted with 310 hours dedicated to boating safety. Total overtime hours utilized was 992 hours.

It is apparent that the activity documented through numbers of arrests, citations, warnings is less than those reported last year; however, since FWC focused patrol and enforcement efforts in the Lower Keys this year, these numbers might simply reflect that reportable activity in the Lower Keys is less than reportable activity that occurred in the Middle Keys last year. In the past, FWC has typically experienced much lower numbers of visitors to the Lower Keys than the number of visitors that visit the Upper Keys during the crawfish sport season. Although there are a number of conjectures as to why the statistics reflect less documented activity, what is apparent to many of the officers is that the rule changes are getting out to the public. This was evident by the number of sportsmen who demonstrated they were well informed and abiding by the rules and by the types of questions being asked by the public. The decreased numbers might also indicate the positive effect of cumulative years of enforcement and educational efforts made by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement.

On August 1, Officer Christopher Mattson responded to a call that a diver was snorkeling under the Tavernier Creek Bridge, a high vessel traffic area, without a diver down flag displayed. The officer arrived, addressed the safety situation, then conducted a fisheries inspection. A Miami man was issued two citations for possession of out of season crawfish and undersize crawfish. In addition, the diver was cited for failure to display a diver down flag.

In addition to the numerous special details and activity associated with the crawfish sport season, the Special Enforcement Area FWC and Sanctuary Officers have initiated another detail to address new rules in effect that have established bag limits and licensing requirements for commercial crawfish divers and prohibiting harvesting from illegally placed artificial habitat. Officers have been conducting continuous daytime and nighttime patrols and have been utilizing Sanctuary certified divers to investigate possible violations and to release crawfish from illegally placed habitat in order to stimulate them to return to their natural environment. The 82' Point Monroe was utilized as a radar platform to facilitate the operation. Numerous smaller patrol vessels have been utilized as rapid response units to investigate information received by radar, and information called in by FWC Pilot John Murphy. To date, the detail has intercepted 5 sets of commercial divers diving in the immediate vicinity of illegal artificial habitat. A physical arrest was made when a commercial dive boat operator suddenly noticed the officers were present and attempted to warn the divers below by running his engines at high rpms and running in tight, continuous circles above the divers. The man was charged with reckless operation. Additional other charges from the enforcement effort have resulted in citations for careless operation, and three citations for improper placard displays. The new rules have met with a tremendous amount of opposition within the commercial diving community.

On August 2, Sanctuary Officer Liz Reisz, while on water patrol at Yellow Shark Channel, conducted a fisheries inspection on a Georgia registered boat. The officer issued a citation for

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 8

possession of eight undersize mangrove snapper and one warning for possession of over the limit mangrove snapper.

Sanctuary Officer Bill Green and Lieutenant Bill Burns responded to a mayday distress call off Little Palm Island. A 16' vessel was reported sinking with two people on board. A Good Samaritan successfully recovered the victims and no injuries occurred.

Officer Christopher Mattson issued numerous citations to a group of divers from Fort Lauderdale, just bayside of Founders Park, Plantation Key. Two subjects were each charged with possession of two speared crawfish, spear fishing in the Upper Keys, and possession of two crawfish during closed season. They were also given warning for failure to display a diver down flag, failure to possess a crawfish measuring device, and failure to possess a Florida Salt Water Fishing License. The 16-year-old juvenile on board was issued citations for failure to possess a Florida Saltwater Fishing License, failure to possess a crawfish endorsement, and failure to display a diver down flag. He was warned for possession of crawfish during closed season.

Sanctuary Officer David McDaniel, on patrol at Triangles, issued a citation for spear fishing in the Upper Keys to a Miami man in possession of two speared hogfish and two speared mutton snapper. The officer recalled having an encounter with the same individual three years ago when he cited the man for spear fishing in the Upper Keys. Officer McDaniel was then called to a significant grounding at Grecian Rocks.

Sanctuary Officers David McDaniel and Scott Larosa responded to a significant vessel grounding on the coral of Grecian Rocks, Upper Keys. The 67' custom-built sport fisherman, "Adaro" was under the command of a captain new to the vessel and unfamiliar with the geography and reef line where he ran aground. Damage to the hull caused approximately 200 gallons of diesel fuel spill before the remaining 1,800 gallons could be removed from the grounded vessel. It was estimated the vessel was cruising at approximately 20 knots before it ran up onto the rocks. Sanctuary Officers worked diligently from noon to 3 am investigating the accident site and assisting commercial salvage in safeguarding the vessel and to prevent further damage to the reef. Commercial salvors worked through the night and succeeded in removing the vessel by the next morning. It was estimated over \$100,000. dollars damage occurred to the \$2 million vessel. Federal charges for the grounding and causing coral reef injury will be supported by damage assessments conducted by Sanctuary biologists. On August 6, Sanctuary Officer David McDaniel spoke with biologists who estimate at least 100 square feet of live coral damage; however, this estimate is approximately only 8% of the total damage. Biologists are still assessing the more significant damage that occurred to the important framework of the reef.

Officers Torrey McAlpin, Seth Kern, Investigator Al Corfield, and Florida Park Officers investigated a case involving the illegal possession of ten Queen Conch, out of season stone crab, and whole bodied stone crab. One of the subjects had warrant for failure to appear on charges of possession of crawfish out of season, possession of illegal crawfish with a bond

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 9

amount of \$1,500. In addition to arresting the subject on the warrants, he was also charged with possession of ten queen conch and possession of stone crab during closed season.

On August 3, Sanctuary Officer David McDaniel encountered a suspicious subject operating a 28' Baja inside the Carysfort Reef SPA. The officer's investigation revealed the Miami resident had two active warrants through Miami/Dade, both for failure to pay child support. Bond amounts were \$500. and \$1,000.. After being taken into custody, the subject then requested that his vessel be left at anchor, unattended, since a friend of his was already coming to meet him there. Officer Wade Heffner assisted by transporting the subject to Plantation Key Jail.

Officer Liz Reisz, while on water patrol at the north end of Channel 5 Bridge, encountered some divers with no diver down flag displayed. The subjects had a spear gun, a snatch hook attached to a broken fishing rod, and a wire stringer with one undersize crawfish. The officer continued to investigate the campsite and discovered three additional speared crawfish. A Brazilian National residing in Ft. Lauderdale was cited for spear fishing in the Upper Keys, possession of four crawfish during closed season, possession of four undersize crawfish, spearing crawfish and given a warning for failure to display a diver down flag.

Officer David McDaniel issued a citation to a resident of Perrine for spear fishing within the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary, Three Sister's Reef. He gave warnings for failure to possess a Florida Saltwater Fishing License and failure to display a diver down flag.

Officer Jay Marvin, while on patrol at Founders Park, Plantation Key issued a citation to a 35-year-old Miami man for spear fishing in the Upper Keys. He was also given a warning for failure to display a diver down flag. An accompanying juvenile was given a warning for a dive flag violation. At Tea Table Channel, the officer issued another citation for spear fishing in the Upper Keys to a 22-year-old Miami man. He also gave warnings for failure to possess a Florida Saltwater Fishing License and failure to display a diver down flag.

Sanctuary Officers Scott Larosa and David McDaniel responded to a report of subjects spear fishing on the Spiegel Grove wreck. Witnesses also reported seeing the fishermen harvesting a large black grouper. The officers intercepted the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. The Gentleman from Broward County was issued a federal citation for spear fishing within the Key Largo Management Area. This is the first citation that has been issued at the Spiegel Grove wreck since it became an artificial reef. Then, while on patrol at Turtle Reef, the officers issued a citation to a man for spear fishing within the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary and also issued warnings for failure to possess a Florida Saltwater Fishing License and failure to display a diver down flag.

Officer Christian Mathisen, while on land patrol at Duck Key, conducted a fisheries inspection on two Miami residents. He asked if they had any fish, they responded that they were packing up and leaving. They had one surgeon fish and when asked if they had any other fish, the subjects claimed, again, that they were leaving. When pressed, they opened their cooler and the officer found they had a ten pound tarpon. They were issued a citation for possessing an untagged tarpon. The officer continued his patrol in the same general area and encountered two Miami men fishing alongside the road. When the officer approached, one man turned and muttered an

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 10

expletive. The inspection revealed 31 schoolmaster snapper. The subjects were cited for 11 over the bag limit of schoolmaster snapper. Just next to them, another man from Miami was in possession of 21 schoolmaster snapper. He was also issued a citation for possession of 11 over the bag limit of schoolmaster snapper.

Sanctuary Officer Bill Green responded to the report of a vessel explosion followed by a fire on a rental boat carrying six people, approximately one mile south of Sombrero Light, Marathon. U. S. Coast Guard responded and recovered six people from the water, none were injured. The officer issued a self-reporting boating accident form.

On August 4, Lieutenant Roy Payne and Officer Andy Zamonis responded by water to assist Monroe County Sheriff's Office to retrieve the body of a deceased white male that was discovered floating in Safe Harbor, Key West. The incident did not appear boating accident related and was turned over to MCSO for investigation.

Officers Carlo Morato and Jason Rieff responded to assist Monroe County Sheriff's Office in the pursuit of a stolen vehicle. The suspects exited the vehicle at Long Key and one of them jumped off the bridge. The subject was eventually recovered and both subjects were turned over to Monroe County Sheriff's Deputies.

On August 5, Officers Christian Mathisen, Heather Thieman, Torrey McAlpin, and Seth Kern were en route to a special detail off Sawyer Key when they encountered a 28' Renegade traveling westbound, ocean side of Big Pine Key. The vessel passed less than 50 feet from the officer's bow while the officer had blue light and siren activated. The operator of the Renegade, a Big Pine Key resident, turned and looked directly at the officers and the patrol vessel and accelerated at a high rate of speed. As the officers followed, the operator and passenger looked back numerous times at the patrol vessel and continued to accelerate and made no attempt to stop. The officers followed the vessel for over five miles before the vessel finally stopped at Niles Channel Bridge. The operator was arrested for felony fleeing and eluding and the passenger was arrested for resisting without violence. U. S. Border Patrol will be taking custody of both subjects after state charges are resolved for INS violations. The vessel has a long history with U. S. Border Patrol for illegal migrant smuggling. The vessel is being returned to the owner.

On August 6, Officers Jay Marvin, Megan Krynicki, Christopher Mattson, and FWC Pilot John Murphy responded to the report of a missing diver at Indian Key Fill. The missing diver was reported as Pat Wells, Park Manager at Lignum Vitae State Park. Fifteen minutes into the search, Wells was located safe and sound. Apparently while he was diving, his vessel broke free and he surfaced to discover his vessel had drifted away.

Officer Vicente Lopez responded to a boating accident involving an injury at Faro Blanco Resort, Marathon. The operator apparently was trying to remove some gear around his prop and suffered a minor injury to his leg. Officer Carlo Morato will be conducting the investigation.

Officer Christopher Mattson issued a citation to a Coral Gables man for spear fishing in the Upper Keys, one mile east of Tavernier Key. The man was in possession of five speared

M O R E

**WEEKLY LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT
SUMMARY, SOUTH REGION**

Page 11

hogfish and one mangrove snapper. While ocean side of Plantation Key, the officer also issued a citation to a resident of Jacksonville Beach for possession of two undersize crawfish.

Officer Morato responded to assist in locating a missing diver off Sombrero Light. Before the officer arrived, a Good Samaritan boater located the diver. No injuries occurred.

Officer Jay Marvin and FWC Pilot John Murphy responded to a report of a possible missing diver off Old Dan Bank, Port Antigua. A vessel was observed anchored in the location for more than two hours without any divers or activity. The caller was concerned that divers might be missing. Almost an hour later, it was learned that a caravan of boaters had intentionally left the boat anchored there with the intention of returning later. The search was terminated.

COLLIER COUNTY

On July 31, Officer Shelly Williams, on patrol North Naples, conducted a fisheries inspection that resulted in a citation issued for possession of nine over the bag limit of black bass. The fisherman allowed the officer to inspect a cooler inside the trunk of his vehicle where he found 14 black bass. Afterward, the subject said that some men with a cast net gave him the fish; however, the officer observed the subject had a bass hook on his reel and admitted to being at the fishing site for approximately an hour.

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